

Introduction to Organizational Communication–COMM 240

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Ideas that guide our work:

George Cheney, an organizational communication scholar, once posed the following question, “*What if we were to make organizations more for people?*” This question will be a guiding question for this course as we explore the communication issues and processes that make organizations work for (and against) people and help them create particular identities.

Communication creates organizations, and organizations create communication. This course suggests that organizations affect and are affected by all aspects of modern life, often in subtle and unnoticed ways. By studying the relationships among individuals, organizations, organizing, and communication we become more aware of these influences, going beyond taken-for-granted stances toward organizations, and we can use this awareness to guide us in navigating our organizational lives. To assist in building this awareness, we will make many applications of these organizational communication theories to our everyday experiences. This theory-based course is designed to help you develop a communicative framework for understanding our organizational life.

What you can accomplish through diligent work in this course:

- You will develop a communicative lens in order to interpret your own organizational life.
- You will know major points in the history of organizational communication and work.
- You will be able to ask questions about organizations and organizational communication from functional, interpretive/cultural, and critical perspectives.
- You will be able to identify communication issues occurring in your organizational life.
- You will be able to use a variety of theories to explain and critique the enactment and consequences of organizational and individual actions within organizational contexts.

Required materials that assist you in accomplishing the above:

Miller, K. (2012) *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes*. (6th Ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Course Policies

Late Work: All work is due on the assigned due date. After the due date, I will deduct 10% from the final grade for each day late. Thus, an assignment that is 5 days late will be reduced by 50%.

Professional Courtesy: Professional courtesy includes respecting others’ opinions and not using ad-hominem attacks on others.

Written Work: Written work is to be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font using Times New Roman, and in APA style when appropriate.

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Canvas: This course requires use of Canvas. Students are responsible for checking email and Canvas daily for class updates. You are also responsible for checking grades on Canvas on a weekly basis. Any discrepancies should be reported to me within one week of posting. Canvas will also be used to post supplemental readings.

- Students are responsible for checking Canvas and UWSP e-mail daily for announcements.

Emailing: I will try to answer weekday e-mails within 24 hours. If you e-mail me after 5pm it is likely that I will not read your message until the next morning. If I can, I will try to respond to e-mails on the weekends, otherwise you can expect a response on the following working day.

Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures

UWSP 14.01 Statement of principles

The board of regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff and students of the university of Wisconsin system believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the university of Wisconsin system. The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions.

UWSP 14.03 Academic misconduct subject to disciplinary action.

(1) Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- (a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- (c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- (d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- (f) Assists other students in any of these acts.

(2) Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas; stealing examinations or course materials; submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course; tampering with the laboratory experiment or computer program of another student; knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an

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arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

Special Needs: If you have special needs that require accommodation, please inform me within the first week of class so that arrangements can be made. Be sure to coordinate with [DATC](#) as well.

Incompletes: Incompletes will not be given except under extreme circumstances and only with extensive documentation of necessity. Please contact me and the Dean of Students immediately if medical or family reasons prevent your ability to complete the course.

Reading: Assigned readings appear on the syllabus, and on Canvas. I have made the course schedule to reflect a normal in-person course. To ensure that you are keeping up, you should complete the assigned readings and work by the dates listed below. After reading, try and develop your own stance on each theory/perspective. You should not only be concerned with what “author x” says about the theory but also what you think of it—and what you can DO with it as a student of human communication.

Assignments: All assignments are due by 11:30pm on the date listed. For example, I leave discussion posts open until Sunday nights so that people who work during the week may be able to participate.

All assignments must be typed in double-spaced 12 point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins. Please turn assignments into the appropriate Dropbox folder on our Canvas page.

Contributions to online classroom environment and guidelines: *Make positive, respectful contributions.* The nature of this course requires that you have an online presence. Your contributions are measured, in part, by what and how often you post in our online discussions. Please remember to be respectful of others, even if you do not agree with their views.

How we can tell how well you are meeting the course goals:

Grades are a product of your ability and performance, not just effort. That you tried really hard is commendable, but trying does not guarantee an A. Remember Yoda “Do or do not, there is no try”. If you wish to earn a particular grade then make sure that your effort and performances match your goal. An average grade is a ‘C.’

Your course grade will be based upon the following scores:

In the News	140 pts
Exam 1	70 pts
Exam 2	70 pts
Exam 3	70 pts
Case Study	140 pts
Reading Quizzes	70 pts
Discussion Posts	50 pts

TOTAL **610 pts**

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Grading Scale

A = 610 – 567	B = 529 – 506	C = 468 – 445	D = 407 – 384
A- = 566 – 549	B- = 505 – 488	C- = 444 – 427	D- = 383 – 366
B+ = 548 – 530	C+ = 487 – 469	D+ = 426 – 408	F = 365 – 0

Assignments

In the News

In the News is an assignment designed to give you an opportunity to apply what you're learning in this course to events currently happening in corporations around the world. Find a news article or an editorial online about either a specific corporation or business trends in general. After you find an article or editorial, think about what we have learned from class and apply course content to the article in a meaningful way that helps you to understand and demonstrate course related ideas. Essentially, what have we learned about organizational communication from this article? Your write-up should be 2-3 pages long, double-spaced, size 12, and Times New Roman font with one inch margins.

Exams

Three exams help to assess how much information you've retained. While many of you prefer to look up information in the moment, you will need a strong base of knowledge to help you begin developing your skills after you leave college. These exams prompt you to learn that information and provide an assessment of knowledge retained. Question formatting will include multiple choice and true/false questions. Exams will cover all assigned readings, and discussion posts.

Case Study

Events happen in organizations that force people to make sense of them, find the most plausible solutions, and enact those solutions. With this assignment, you will have the opportunity to take what you have learned and apply that knowledge to a case study. You will select a case study from the case studies I have uploaded to Canvas, make sense of that case study, analyze it, and provide a written 2-3 page report about the case. In the report, I want you to identify the communication problems/issues you discovered in the case (the case will not tell you what the problems are), use content from the class to explain the problems and possible solutions, and then articulate what you think should be done to solve the communication problems. You may consider such options as developing a PR campaign, rebranding an organization's image, trying to change the culture of an organization, or informing relevant stakeholders of sensitive information. The options are endless and you decide. Your written analysis should be turned into the appropriate Dropbox folder on our Canvas site.

Reading Quizzes

There will be a total of 7 reading quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz is worth a total of ten points and consists of five questions. The questions will be either multiple choice or true/false. The content for each reading quiz will come from a specific chapter in the textbook and is listed in our course schedule. You can find the reading quizzes under the quizzes section on our Canvas page. I give you a range of approximately 7 days to complete each quiz so that you can take them at your convenience. Pay attention to our Canvas calendar or the table below to stay on track of your work. Quizzes cannot be made up.

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Discussion Posts:

Discussion posts are designed to enhance our learning. For each discussion post I will post a prompt for you to answer. You are required to submit your own response to the prompt and questions and **then** comment on at least **three** other peoples' posts. I give you a range of approximately 7 days to complete each discussion post so that you can complete them at your convenience. Pay attention to our Canvas calendar or the table below to stay on track of your work. Discussion posts cannot be made up and it is beneficial to complete them earlier than later so you are not rushing at the last minute. Completing them sooner will help you avoid technology fails.

Assignment Due Dates

Date	Assignment	Location
9/9 – 9/15	Discussion Post 1	Canvas → Discussion
9/16 – 9/20	Reading Quiz 1 Chapter 3	Canvas → Quizzes
9/16 – 9/22	Discussion Post 2	Canvas → Discussions
9/23 – 9/27	Reading Quiz 2 Chapter 4	Canvas → Quizzes
9/23 – 9/29	Discussion Post 3	Canvas → Discussions
9/30 – 10/4	Exam 1	Canvas → Quizzes
10/7 – 10/11	Reading Quiz 3 Chapter 5	Canvas → Quizzes
10/7 – 10/13	Discussion Post 4	Canvas → Discussions
10/21 – 10/25	Reading Quiz 4 Chapter 7	Canvas → Quizzes
10/28 – 11/1	Reading Quiz 5 Chapter 8	Canvas → Quizzes
11/1	In the News Paper	Canvas → Dropbox → In the News Paper
10/14 – 10/20	Discussion Post 5	Canvas → Discussions
10/21 – 10/27	Discussion Post 6	Canvas → Discussions
10/28 – 11/3	Discussion Post 7	Canvas → Discussions
11/4 – 11/8	Exam 2	Canvas → Quizzes
11/11 - 11/15	Reading Quiz 6 Chapter 10	Canvas → Quizzes
11/11- 11/17	Discussion Post 8	Canvas → Discussions
11/18 – 11/24	Discussion Post 9	Canvas → Discussions
12/2 – 12/6	Reading Quiz 7 Chapter 13	Canvas → Quizzes
12/2 – 12/8	Discussion Post 10	Canvas → Discussions
12/6	Case Studies	Canvas → Dropbox → Case Studies
12/16 – 12/19	Exam 3	Canvas → Quizzes

Class Schedule on the following page.

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Class Schedule

Week	Date	Reading Assignment Due	Work Assignment Due
Week 1	9/3	Introduction to Course	
		Miller Chapter 1 – The Challenge of Org. Comm.	
Week 2	9/9	Miller Chapter 2 – Classical Approaches	
			Discussion Post 1
Week 3	9/16	Miller Chapter 3 – Human Relations & Human Resources Approaches	Reading Quiz 1 on Chapter 3 only Discussion Post 2
Week 4	9/23	Miller Chapter 4 – Systems Approaches	Reading Quiz 2 on Chapter 4 only Discussion Post 3
Week 5	9/30	Exam 1	
Week 6	10/7	Miller Chapter 5 – Cultural Approaches	Discussion Post 4 Reading Quiz 3 on chapter 5 only
Week 7	10/14	Miller Chapter 6 – Critical Approaches	Discussion Post 5
Week 8	10/21	Miller Chapter 7 – Socialization Processes	Reading Quiz 4 on chapter 7 only Discussion Post 6
Week 9	10/28	Miller Chapter 8 – Decision-Making Processes	Reading Quiz 5 on chapter 8 only Discussion Post 7 In the News Paper Due
Week 10	11/4	Miller Chapter 9 – Conflict Management Processes	
		Exam 2	
Week 11	11/11	Miller Chapter 10 – Organizational Change & Leadership Processes	Discussion Post 8 Reading Quiz 6 on chapter 10 only
Week 12	11/18	Miller Chapter 11 – Process of Emotion in the Workplace	Discussion Post 9
Week 13	11/25	Miller Chapter 12 – Organizational Diversity Processes	
	11/27 – 12/1	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 14	12/2	Miller Chapter 13 – Technological Processes	Reading Quiz 7 on chapter 13 only Discussion Post 10 Case Studies Due
Week 15	12/9	Miller Chapter 14 – The Changing Landscape of the Organization	
Week 16	12/16 – 12/19	Exam 3	

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